Private Sector's participation in water Distribution and storage

†2131. DR. D. MASTHAN:
SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government are contemplating to formulate a policy for the participation of private sector in the activities relating to water distribution management and storage;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Government will have to charge taxes from consumers for using water because of private sector's participation in the activities relating to water availability ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY): (a) and (b) The Government of India had constituted a High Level Committee under the Chairmanship of the then Union Minister of State for Water Resources to examine the feasibility and scope of Private Sector Participation in Irrigation and Multi Purpose Projects. The Committee submitted its Report in December, 1995. The important recommendations of the Committee in brief are as follows :

(i) Investigation, obtaining techno-economic, environmental (including resettlement and rehabilitation) any investment clearances should be carried out by governmental organisations.

(ii) Land should be encumbrance-free.

(iii) Overall development and safety of the structures should be ensured.

(iv) In the case of command area development programme, private sector participation could be upto bulk supply of water to Water Users Association.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(v) Exact type of participation may be decided by the states. Period of lease could be 20-30 years after which the projects should be transferred to the Government department.

(vi) Funding could be through promoter's equity in full or partly by the State and financial institutions.

(vii) Private Party should be assured of a minimum quantity of water at agreed rate because of value addition to water.

(viii) Reservoir working table prepared by the Government should be strictly adhered to.

(ix) Legal aspects vis-a-vis State Irrigation Acts should be examined.

(x) Incentives such as tourism, tax holidays, floating tax-free revenue bonds/loans at concessional rates including moratorium on repayment, development of pisciculture, limited use of reservoir water for horticulture, right of water sports, navigation in reservoir areas, lands for commercial exploitation on embankments, etc. could be considered to be given to private investors.

(xi) Catchment area treatment of projects should be carried out by Governmental departments.

This report was circulated to the Secretaries in-charge of irrigation/Water Resources department of all the States/Union Territories in 1996 for futher necessary action.

(c) All types of Water Resources Projects are conceived, planned, executed and maintained by the concerned State Governments from their own allocation of Plan Funds. As such the water rates for various types of uses are also fixed by them.

Survey of Ground Water Level

2132. SHRI P. SOUNDARA RAJAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted to ascertain the ground water potential in the country;